# Interesting Chat and Stage Gossip for Playgoers

## Theresa Maxwell Conover Speaks of Dressing Rooms, Of Traffic Cops and Stars

By Harriette Underhill

"Once upon a time a man built a theater and had the dressing rooms well ventilated. He was promptly shot and nobody ever dared it again—hence our theaters as you see them! Don't sit there; you'll be in the draft; sit here." This was Theresa Maxwell Conover talking in her dressing room at the Casino after "Honey Dew" was over and we had wondered what we

In "Honeydew"

Theresa Maxwell Conover

should talk to her about, but after that very auspicious opening we decided not to talk at all—to let Theresa do it.

And right here we are going to confess! Whenever in the coming season we get stuck for an interview or some one of our victims is stupid we shall steal some of the things that Miss Conover said in the thirty minutes we spent with her. She shouldn't mind, for she has enough of them up her sleeve to last six women six seasons.

After due consideration and calm deliberation we have decided to start off by writing what Miss Conover thinks of Boston. "Boston is a disease!" she said, and then we stopped her.

"Before you go any further, Miss Conover," we said, "you ought to know that he is from Boston. Now do your worst."

"Yes," she answered, smiling brilliantly at the man from Boston. "But he is FROM Boston, not IN Boston. He found it out, you see, and is now immune. I stayed in Boston all through the flu scare, for I knew that if I came to New York in the middle of the run I should break my contract and never go back.

"In the first place, I can't live without fresh air, and you don't get any in Boston. Fact, you know. The car windows are hermetically sealed and the germs are fifteen years old. Some other city, Cleveland, I think it was, had a car line that failed and they sold the cars to Boston. All were guaranteed airtight and all have flat wheels."

The man from Boston was laughing, but he looked guilty.

"Why don't you go in your own car?" he asked. "You had it with you."

"Oh, yes," said Miss Conover, with animation. "I must tell you about that. All of the traffic cops read Schiller. Don't they, now?" she said, turning to the man for confirmation.

"But how do you know what the traffic cops read?" we asked, incredulously. "Did you start a class for them, or endow a cop's library or something?"

"Oh, no, one doesn't have to know them to know what they read. They read in the road as they direct the traffic: a case of he who runs may read. The one who stands on the busiest corner, corresponding to Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue in our own New York, wear big horn spectacles and I know he reads Schiller because he always stopped me by a majestic wave of the hand and there I had to stand till he finished his paragraph. One day he turned over a leaf and I thought it was my signal to go and I started across the road when he pounced on me. 'Pardon me, madam,' he said, 'your impetuosity is reprehensible. Be more circumspect in the future or I shall find it necessary to discipline you.' And he passed the word along and I couldn't budge after that without a traffic cop on my trail."

"Do they read on their beat?" we asked. "Truly—no joking!"

"Of course they do, but that isn't all. The men speak to you in the street!"

"Horrors," we ejaculated, "not the same men who are cops and read Schiller."

"No, different ones! They drive up in Fords and stop at the curb and say, 'Pardon, won't you go to supper with me?' You know, they call dinner 'supper.' One day I arrived at a tea breathless with indignation. Three men had just spoken to me. I stated my experience, and said it occurred every day. One spinster was there who was eight years older than Methuselah. She was wizened and wigged. 'It's very funny,' she squeaked. 'No one ever insults me in the streets of Boston!'"

"Did she wear a red velvet turban?" asked the man from Boston, eagerly.

"She did," said Miss Conover, "but that doesn't identify her. Every elderly female in Boston wears a red velvet toque. Daring, you know, and all that sort of thing! Untrammeled! Emancipated! Not too dark a red—that would be unladylike—but a nice, darkish red.

"And the dressing rooms—in the cellar! At least, ours were. And the audiences—well, the least said the better."

"If I should tell the world what you said about the Hub you'd never be allowed to star there."

"Well, I don't want to star there; but I am going to star and I'll tell you about it later. But where was I? Oh, yes, I said 'Audiences' and it made me remember that I wanted to ask you why it is that all the audiences on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays don't laugh, and on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays they do laugh? Not quite so heartily on Saturday afternoon as in the evening.

"Now, to-day is Tuesday and there was hardly a ripple. Last Saturday night we rang down fifteen minutes later than we did to-night; just the laughs held us up. Did you hear any one laugh to-night?"

"Yes," we answered truthfully. "Two—him and me. And now tell us about your being a star.

"Well," said Miss Conover, "you

Dancer at the Hippodrome

Miriam Miller

know I've an idea that fresh air, good health, ambition and a knowledge of the arts are needed in the building of a star. Why, do you think, I learned to tell the difference between Bouguereau and Michael Angelo? Why, do you think, I'm reading French and Italian three hours a day? Why I am practicing at the piano and taking voice culture?

"Because you enjoy it," we answered, for that is our only reason for doing anything.

"Yes, because I enjoy it and because nothing is wasted. If I know languages and music and painting, doesn't it help me in my chosen profession? Of course, and my chance will come and without the aid of Lucille or Bendel. 'Clothes parts' are what I've been associated with always and I want to throw them off."

But, we hope when she does, Miss Conover will let us know so that we can be on hand to pick them up. Think of any one who is so ambitious that she doesn't want to play clothes parts when it gives you a perfectly legitimate excuse to spend all your money for clothes. And Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like Theresa Maxwell Conover.


## Frank Tinney Rejoices That Burnt Cork Is Passing Out Of His Role as a Comedian

"So many questions have been asked about why I practically gave up blackface," said Frank Tinney yesterday, "that I feel compelled to make public my reasons for the change." In his dressing room at the Selwyn Theater, where he stars in "Tickle Me," the comedian said:

"It was only by chance that I ever happened to do blackface at the beginning of my career. I was thrust into a minstrel show, and as we all had to take part in the blackface opening I was compelled to anoint my face with burnt cork. Gradually I gained a chance to do a couple of specialties and these proved to be such a success that in spite of all absence of dialect I gained a reputation as a blackface comedian.

"Naturally, when I went into vaudeville I did a blackface act, and the longer I did it the longer I had to do it. Vaudeville audiences, in the first place, get used to having their favorites do familiar acts in a familiar way. So if I had changed my number from black to white face during my variety engagements I would have lost my following. All this time, however, I had been longing for a sustained comedy part and the chance to throw off my dusky face covering. Yet, though I did gain the comedy roles, it was not until 'Tickle Me' that I really had the opportunity in New York to expose my real skin to the footlights.

"My principal purpose in wanting to be a white-man comedian is purely selfish; but the truth is I want to preserve my own identity as an individual, and the longer I do blackface the less chance I have to show the world the real Frank Tinney. You see, self-preservation is the first law of nature, and I'm trying desperately to save myself from being blotted out by a burnt cork shadow.

"No one except a professional comedian, however, can ever realize how important costume and make-up are for getting laughs. There's a whole philosophy in back of it, and though we comedy fellows may not always work it out scientifically, we sense it by intuition.

"Audiences nowadays, however, do not require such ridiculous comedy as they did not so long ago. Their idea of comedy has improved and has become much more subtle. Blackface trimmings are not demanded by Broadway nowadays, because Broadway is now accustomed to the 'nut' comedian, who gets results with ordinary street clothes and practically no facial make-up at all.

"I, personally, take advantage of the sagacity of present-day audiences, for I like to have them think they are 'in' on the joke. I play for an extemporaneous effect and I pretend I make my jokes up as I go along. Of course, I have a set routine to which I always come back, but I personally enjoy the perils of making up gags as I work. I emphasize this method by my delivery, for I always affect a sort of naive manner—innocent-like and timid. My facial expressions are also gauged to fit the situation.

"I guess I am the only comedian who hasn't been longing to do Hamlet, Beau Brummel or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. My one ambition is to be myself. I want to be Frank Tinney himself and not his blacked-up shadow. While I still cling to blackface in my ten-minutes' introduction in the first act of 'Tickle Me,' Arthur Hammerstein will present me next season in a vehicle that will allow me to dump burnt cork from my make-up box entirely."

In "Over the Hill"

Vivienne Osborne

In "Ladies' Night"

Eleanor Dawn

## Great Actors Hypnotize Themselves Into Their Roles, Says Playwright

Self-hypnotism is the secret of good acting, in the opinion of Paul Dickey, co-author with Charles W. Goddard of "The Misleading Lady," "The Ghost Breaker" and the new comedy-drama, "The Broken Wing," which opens at the Forty-eighth Street Theater tomorrow night.

"We do hear a lot about an actor living his part," he says. "I think there is much more to it than the mere words signify. Many actors who honestly believe they are 'living the part' are no more in character just before the performance and during the intermissions than is the audience. They are Bill Jones or Mary Smith until they step on the stage, and then they attempt a swift metamorphosis that is not at all convincing. The moment they step off the stage they again are Bill Jones or Mary Smith.

"You don't catch any of our really fine actors taking any such chances. They know, as Sir Henry Irving knew, that they must begin to 'live the part' long before the performance, live it throughout the play and expect to be some time resuming their own personality. Irving used to make up an hour and a half before the curtain. Then he would call a cab and drive alone through the streets steeping himself into the role he was to portray. When he made his entrance he was not Irving except for inescapable mannerisms. He was definitely the character he was interpreting. In other words, he simply hypnotized himself just as surely as though he were under the control of a mesmerist.

"There are numerous instances of this method on the American stage. I know actors who before, during and for some time after a performance actually do not recognize their friends. I'm not exaggerating. It's a fact.

"How is it done? It is deliberate, of course, but I have never heard any player explain his method. In fact, I doubt if many really know they so hypnotize themselves. It is more or less accomplished by concentration of all the faculties upon the work they are to do. Like everything else, it becomes easier with practice. Old timers will 'fall into' a part in a remarkably short time and maintain the identity of the character against all sorts of disturbances. They have developed the ability to eliminate from their consciousness everything that has not to do with the environment in which they move temporarily.

"It may have been done, probably has, but I have never run across an authoritative work on this phase of the art of acting. It seems to me that it is worth attention."

Supporting Miss Anglin

Mary Fowler

## The Evolution of a Star

Raymond Hitchcock

If Dr. Cutting, who was pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Auburn, N. Y., in the late '80s, is still alive, he may be surprised, perhaps pleased, to learn that Raymond Hitchcock, now star of "Hitchy-Koo, 1920," at the New Amsterdam Theater, attributes much of his success upon the stage to some excellent advice given him by Dr. Cutting.

"I had tired of Auburn and had decided to go on the stage," said "Hitchy," as he rested between scenes at the New Amsterdam. "One day I met Dr. Cutting in the street. 'Ray,' he said, 'I hear you are going on the stage. If you do, get with the best companies. If you get with the best companies there is class to the profession.' Shortly after this conversation I went to Philadelphia and joined a 'fly-by-night' 'ten-twent-thirt' company. But I didn't stay. I got a job in John Wanamaker's store and I stayed there until I got a chance with the Carlton Opera Company, a reputable organization, at the Broad Street Theater, in Philadelphia. So, with the exception of that one little experience, I have followed Dr. Cutting's advice and stayed with reputable organizations."

Hitchcock's stage career is remarkable for the strong character parts in which he has appeared. But of late years he has virtually dropped all semblance of character, and in the "Hitchy Koo" series, of which the present production is the fourth, he is content to be just "Hitchy."

Hitchcock's first appearance with the Carlton Opera Company in Philadelphia was in "The Brigand." He was in "The Golden Wedding" in the same city the next season. His first appearance in New York was in May, 1894, in "Charley's Aunt," at the Bijou Theater. Hitchcock appeared as Bulwer Brady, the Englishman, with a cold in his head. Hitchcock played the character "straight." Although he did not earn a cent from the piece, Hitchcock maintains that "Charley's Aunt" was the turning point in his career, and marked his arrival as an actor. Since that engagement he has never sought a part. The managers always have sought him.

After "Charley's Aunt," the season of 1895 saw Hitchcock as Willie Wilt in "The Night Clerk," and the season of 1896 as Worthington Best in "Courted in Court." At the American Theater, in 1898, he played Bicoquet in "Paul Jones," Lambertuccio in "Boccaccio, Lurcher in "Dorothy" and Fanfan Pasha in "A Trip to Africa." In 1899 he appeared as Senik Cerais in "We Una of Tennessee" and also in "A Dangerous Maid" at the American, followed by David Took, in "Three Little Lambs" at Miner's Fifth Avenue Theater. At the Bijou in 1900 he played with May Irwin in "The Belle of Bridgeport," while the season of 1901 saw him in "Vienna Life" at the Broadway, on tour in "The Burgomaster," and later in "Miss Bob White." Then came the famous "King Dodo," characterized by Hitchcock as his greatest part. "King Dodo" occupied the comedian for two years—a phenomenally long run in those days—and then he made his first appearance as the sole star of a production. The rôle was Abijah Booze in "The Yankee Consul." The piece was produced at the Tremont Theater, Boston, September 21, 1903. The production came to New York in February, 1904. Since then he has appeared as Ripley Royal Dawson in "Easy Dawson," Copeland Schuyler in "The Yankee Tourist," and in "The Merry Go Round. In April, 1909, he appeared as Maurent XVII in the revival of "La Mascotte" at the New Amsterdam Theater. Then came the rôle of Cicero Hannibal Butts in "The Red Widow." Then he was in "The Beauty Doctor" at the Astor Theater. "Betty" was his first production under the management of Charles Dillingham. After "Betty" came a long engagement in England, and upon his return the "Hitchy" series began to be famous throughout the land.

Hitchcock says his greatest pride is that he was "starred" by the newspapers before he was starred by the managers. Long before he aspired to a production of his own or even to stardom, the newspaper headlines said: "Raymond Hitchcock Is Here With His Show." He first saw his name "put up" as a star in Boston when he was appearing in "The Yankee Consul." Slattery's store was being remodeled and was surrounded by a wooden fence, about twelve feet high. The manager of the company caused Hitchcock's name to be painted on the fence in letters at least six feet high.

"I blushed all over when I saw it," says Hitchcock. "I felt that I was unworthy of stardom."

At what period in his life did he have the most fun?

"When I was working for Mr. Albee in vaudeville in Philadelphia and giving ten or twelve shows a day," he says without hesitation.

### Virginia Lee in New Picture

Virginia Lee is playing the rôle of Beatrice Haxlon in the Marguerite Clark production of "Scrambled Wives." This screen version of the popular play will come out the first of the year.

## School Authorities Follow Faversham Lead For Twain Celebration

The movement instituted by William Faversham, who is appearing in Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper" at the Booth Theater, and the literary friends of Mark Twain, represented by Thomas B. Welles of Harper & Bros., to have November 30, the birthday of Mark Twain, observed annually, has apparently taken firm hold upon the affections of the lovers of the great humorist, as well as the educators of the country and city. Dr. William L. Ettinger, city superintendent of the public schools, is enthusiastic over the idea and has issued a special notice to every public school in greater New York, directing that exercises in commemoration of Mark Twain be held. These exercises, Dr. Ettinger suggested, should take the form of readings from the works of Mark Twain together with talks on the life of the humorist.

Dr. George S. Davis, president of Hunter College, Professor Helen Gray Cone, head of the college's English department, and Professor Henrietta Prentiss, who is in charge of the dramatic part of the college, have also seen the educational value in the suggestion. Accordingly, the department of English at Hunter has arranged an exercise in observance of the day. There will be readings from Mark Twain's works and Mr. Faversham has been invited to address the entire student body.

President Nicholas Murray Butler has expressed himself as thoroughly in favor of the annual observance of November 30, and especially of the coming November 30, which is the eighty-fifth anniversary of Mark Twain's birth.

"It is an excellent idea," said Dr. Butler, "and should spread over the country generally."

Columbia University will have an exercise at its chapel on Tuesday morning.

Arrangements are now being completed for the celebration of the eighty-fifth anniversary at the Booth Theater.

A Smile From "Tickle Me"

Memphis Russell

### "Good Times" Reaches 200

Charles Dillingham's pageant "Good Times" reaches its 200th presentation at the Hippodrome this week, with a record of attendance which surpasses that of all preceding spectacles at the big playhouse. When the second century mile post is passed more than 1,000,000 patrons will have seen it a nce the season began. The circus features this week will provide the new novelty, with "Poodles" Hanneford, the Hanneford family and Powers's Performing Elephants offering new divertissements.

## Once Child Actors, Who Played Same Role, Are Now Leads in 'Bab' Cast

Donald Gallaher enters the cast of "Bab" at the Park Theater to-morrow night, replacing Tom Powers in the rôle opposite Helen Hayes. By a strange coincidence, both Mr. Gallaher and Miss Hayes made their professional debuts on the stage in the same part, the rôle of a juvenile crown prince in "The Royal Family," a delightful romantic comedy in which Annie Russell appeared many years ago in the old Lyceum Theater in Fourth Avenue, a playhouse that now lives only in the memories of New York theatergoers.

Mr. Gallaher was just five years old when he made his appearance in this play, a charming little boy with golden curls. It was the first of a long line of child rôles which he was to play before merging into young manhood. Both he and Miss Hayes, it might be parenthetically added, are the exceptions to the general rule that precocious child actors rarely achieve any measure of success on the stage when once they grow up.

Miss Hayes made her stage début in the rôle of the Prince several years after the original production of "The Royal Family." She played the part in a stock production in Washington and confesses that a certain episode in the comedy really fired her with an ambition to achieve great fame in the theater.

"The little prince," she said, "is given a piece of cake to eat in the second act to quell his exuberance. The stage directions call for him to ask for and receive a second helping. I distinctly remember that the property man had bought some delicious cake with orange frosting for the first night in Washington and when I had had my second piece I recall that I decided that being an actress was a perfectly gorgeous experience. I am sure that ambition was born then and there."

## Dramatic Field Invaded by Pen Women, Who May Create The Great 'American Play'

The dramatic field has been opened to the members of the League of American Pen Women, a national organization of women writers with members throughout the United States and auxiliaries in the leading cities of the country. This prosperous organization, one of the many organized by and for "the female of the species," has for its primary object the improvement of the conditions of the members, to foster and aid in writing and the placing of those writings; so it was natural that the allurements of the stage should eventually claim their attention.

A few months ago the New York auxiliary, which has such prominent women writers among its official staff as Ruth Mason Rice, Grace Thompson Seton, May Arno Schwatt, Marchesa Theodoro Marcone, Ruth Waterbury, Helen Shesgreen, Kate Mulcahey and others, decided to open a playwriting competition. Surely if Harvard University could add luster to its escutcheon by "Mamma's Affair," "Salvation Nell," "Common Clay," "The Nigger" and others, this organization of active pen women could do so. The prize for which they strove was honorable mention for the four best plays, a cash prize and the professional production on the prize bill. After the committee had given careful consideration to the contestants the fortunate four announced were Annie Nathan Meyer, who offered "P's and Q's"; Ruth Murray Underhill, with "The Door of Miracles"; Elizabeth de Almira, with "Euphemia," and Faith Van Valkenburgh Villas, with "White Tulips." These plays will form the first bill to be presented under the auspices of the League of American Pen Women at the Morosco Theater Friday afternoon, December 10. The plays are being produced under the direction of Grace Griswold, who directed the plays of the Theater Annex and other independent organizations in New York, and Jessie Bonstelle, who is one of the most prominent producers in the country. The players have been selected from the casts of plays current on Broadway, and if the management was the average Broadway management these casts would be advertised as "all star plus."

This first attempt of the League of American Pen Women has received the encouragement and patronage of more than two hundred leaders in social, art and stage circles, among the latter being George Arliss, Dr. and Mrs. Louis K. Anspacher, Mrs. David Bispham, Maxine Elliott, Mrs. Fiske, Daniel Frohman, Grace George and others.

The first program is to be followed at regular intervals by others. From the number and quality of scripts submitted in competition this may yet be the incubator from which "the great American drama" is to be hatched.

In "Daddy Dumplins"

Florence Flinn

Prima Donna in "Irene"

Patti Harrold

## Co-operation Between Players And Managers Is Organized on Keith Circuit With Success

One of the greatest surprises that comes to the theatergoer in these days of social and business unrest is the discovery that the highly specialized vaudeville artists are the best organized body of salaried men and women in the world. It is a part of the entertainment profession for vaudeville artists to always appear gay, light-hearted and carefree when before the public, but with them it is happily a natural attitude nowadays, when the men and women of the profession feel that they are not doing business with the managers as individuals but as part and parcel of their great organization—the National Vaudeville Artists—with a $1,000,000 clubhouse in West Forty-sixth Street.

It is a source of gratification that vaudeville artists have been the first to reach this high economic plane, with its consequent benefits, testifying to their intelligence and enterprise.

It all began when E. F. Albee, head of the B. F. Keith Circuit of Vaudeville Theaters, began propaganda to bring about an era of good will in vaudeville by organizing the artists on one side and the managers on the other into mutually helpful bodies, treating the interests of both sides as identical and providing the machinery for arbitrating differences, discussing innovations, improvements and reforms and putting them in effective operation when adopted.

The vaudeville artists caught the contagion of the idea and became enthusiastic. Organization appealed to them as outlined by Mr. Albee, and accordingly the National Vaudeville Artists came into being. The managers followed the artists' lead with the Vaudeville Managers' Protective Association. The two bodies then entered into commitments and covenants which provide for a joint arbitration board to hear and settle all disputes arising between artists and managers. Now the least important artist in the N. V. A. can take a grievance against a manager or fellow artist to this arbitration board with the whole power of both organizations behind him. He or she is now part and parcel of a body of more than 12,000 artists dealing collectively.

The manager with a complaint comes before the board with the same backing. The result has been a general clearing of the air, the uprooting of many unsatisfactory conditions that had grown up as a part of theatrical "custom" and a contentment on both sides.

The National Vaudeville Artists went ahead and built the finest clubhouse in New York of its kind. Here there are more than a hundred charmingly decorated sleeping rooms and suites; a splendid theater and ballroom, smart restaurants, pool and billiard rooms, reception rooms and every convenience required by a completely efficient club.

The N. V. A. membership carries with it an automatic insurance of $1,000 upon the life of each member; there are sick funds and relief funds. An important department acts as an employment bureau and another looks after the mail of the members who make the clubhouse their permanent address.

Through the cooperation of the vaudeville artists and managers a short, simple and unqualified "play or pay" contract, which means just what it plainly says and is backed up by managers and artists together, has been procured.

The example of the B. F. Keith theaters in making back-stage bright, clean and comfortable is being generally followed. In this respect the vaudeville theaters are a model for playhouse builders.